

ESF 8 Health & Medical Area Command Bulletin

PREPARING FOR FLOODING IN THE GREEN RIVER VALLEY

Public Health
Seattle & King County



September 3, 2009

Bulletin #7

The Situation

Due to damage along the Howard Hanson Dam, which provides flood control along the Green River, the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) has indicated that the dam will only operate at 30% capacity this winter. Therefore, there is a much greater risk of significant flooding during periods of heavy rain throughout the lower Green River Valley, including the cities of Auburn, Kent, Renton, and Tukwila. The USACE is taking a number of steps to try and minimize the flood risk. Contractors have begun building a second grout curtain to help reduce seepage coming from the dam. However, the USACE does not anticipate this will create a full solution to the problems with the dam by this flood season.

The cities of Auburn, Kent, Renton and Tukwila, King County government agencies and private utility partners are working closely with the USACE to prepare for the 2009 flood season. Primary efforts underway include identifying evacuation routes, developing an evacuation and public warning strategy, planning general population and medical needs shelters and assessing critical infrastructure (e.g. power, natural gas, water, sewer and transportation) impacts that may result from the floods.

Key planning assumptions include:

- Severe flooding may prohibit reoccupation of residences & businesses for weeks or months
- Moderate to severe building & infrastructure impacts may occur throughout the Green River Valley ranging from SR 18 to the south, up to I-405 to the north.
- Utility outages may last days or weeks
- Major and minor roadways throughout the Green River Valley, including parts of SR 167 may be impassable
- **(New)** - Evacuations will occur prior to flooding so that all roads are available

(New) Preventing Environmental Health Risks of Flooding: Protecting Home Heating Oil Tanks

After a flood, there are many possible health risks to a community, including those created by water and soil contamination that results from dislodged or leaking home heating oil or fuel tanks. This contamination can also cause, environmental impacts and add damage to equipment and building structures, making clean up after the flood more difficult. To minimize risk, properly secure home heating oil tanks.

When flooding or extremely high groundwater conditions occur, underground fuel storage tank systems may be affected or damaged by flooding in several ways:

- Empty or very low fuel could cause tanks to float out of the ground
- Water and debris can cause damage to the electrical components of fuel tank systems
- Loose fittings above the tanks could cause water to enter the tanks and displace the fuel
- Groundwater pressure can put stress on underground piping potentially causing it to be dislodged or damaged

(Continued on page 2)

About this Bulletin:

Health and Medical Area Command is activated at Public Health – Seattle & King County to coordinate health, medical and mortuary planning for regional hazards including H1N1 influenza and the Howard Hanson Dam – Green River Valley flood risks. We have issued weekly bulletins on these topics to outline key situational updates, planning activities and information specific to health, medical and mortuary response. **Please note this is the final weekly bulletin. In the future we will be issuing situation status reports.**

critical resources

King County Flood Services

King County Office of Emergency Management

Public Health – Seattle & King County

US Army Corps of Engineers

Flood insurance

Personal & Family Preparedness

Green River Flooding

You're invited to a public meeting to help you prepare now for a higher risk of flooding in the lower Green River Valley this flood season.

Wednesday, September 9, 2009

6:00 – 6:30 p.m. Open House

6:30 – 8:00 p.m. Presentation

8:00 – 8:30 p.m. Q & A Session

Green River Community College
Lindbloom Student Center
Cascade Room

This meeting is sponsored by King County and the King County Flood Control District in coordination with the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers.

ARE YOU READY?

Protecting Home Heating Oil Tanks (Continued from pg 1)

To protect home fuel tank systems, there are several steps that can be taken in advance of flooding:

Keep the tank one-third to two-thirds full of fuel.

This will add weight to the tank so it is less likely to float out of the ground. Do not fill the tank full. At least one-third of the tank should be empty to allow for potential flood water that may enter the tank through fittings; this will lessen the likelihood of fuel being released into the flood water.

Secure all the openings on top of the tank. Make sure the fill caps are in good condition and fastened securely.

If you have an above ground fuel oil tank, flooding may cause the tank to shift on its stand causing fuel lines to kink or weaken, or there may be loosened or damaged fittings and filters.

For more information see:

<http://www.sceand.org/Library/DisasterMitigation/Flood/ProtectPropFloodHeatingOilTank.pdf>

If your home oil heat system has been converted to another energy source and the old oil tank has not been properly decommissioned and/or removed, this work should be done before the flood season begins.

If you have questions about the integrity of your tank, fuel lines, tank stand, or the fuel, or need assistance in returning an affected tank back into service, contact your fuel supplier.

For more information on home heating oil tanks see:

<http://www.ecy.wa.gov/pubs/rtc92117.pdf>

For more information on flood prevention for underground storage fuel tanks see:

<http://www.ecy.wa.gov/biblio/0909190.html>

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<http://www.rpin.org/rpinweb/>

Planning Recommendations

✓ Review your flood insurance policies

- Evaluate your policy for structure and contents coverage
- Discuss with your insurance agent whether your coverage includes damage caused by sewer backups or flooding
- **(New)** Discuss with your insurance agent options for covering costs incurred due to business interruption

✓ Purchase flood insurance

- If you do not have flood insurance contact your insurance agent or visit www.floodsmart.gov

✓ Contact your local office of emergency management

- Find out how to receive warning information or emergency alerts
- Inquire for more information on local resources for sandbags

✓ Identify options for flood proofing your facility

- Consider hiring an engineer that can evaluate your facility determine strategies for protecting your property
- Learn more from FEMA at Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) information on preparing businesses
<http://www.fema.gov/library/viewRecord.do?id=3262>

✓ Talk to your vendors and suppliers

- Discuss continuity of service disruptions that may occur as a result of evacuation or business relocation
- If you rely on local vendors, find out what they are doing to plan for business disruptions caused by flooding
- **(New)** If you rely on local vendors, find out what they are doing to plan for business disruptions caused by flooding. Remember to check with vendors that supply telecommunications, web hosting and other information technology services to your facility

✓ Plan for the evacuation and relocation of patients/residents

- Identify and obtain any evacuation equipment, assistance aids or training that may be needed
- Ensure evacuation plan includes movement of medical records and personal medications that patients/residents may need for at least a week
- Identify other facilities or organizations that would be willing to accept your patients/residents if they need to be evacuated
- Discuss requirements for long-term placement of these patients or residents if reoccupation of your current facility will be delayed

✓ Talk to staff and clients about personal and family preparedness

- Encourage staff to identify plans for getting to and from work if transportation is disrupted in the Green River Valley

upcoming events

Green River Flooding Briefing for the Deaf, Deaf/Blind, and Hard of Hearing Community

September 18, 2009
6:30-9:30pm
Kent Senior Activity Center
600 East Smith Street
Kent 98030

Meeting sponsored by the American Red Cross and Public Health-Seattle & King County

Emergency Preparedness Symposium for Businesses

September 23, 2009
5:00- 7:00 p.m.
ShoWare Center
625 W James Street
Kent 98032

*Sign up for email alerts

From Public Health – Seattle & King County about Green River Basin Flooding

<http://www.kingcounty.gov/healthservices/health/preparedness/grreenriverbasin.aspx>

questions?

Please email

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